

# With the Plays, Players and the

Napoleon in comic opera brings to mind all sorts of queer images, and every one of them is to be found in the strange hodge-podge which is served up as an "operatic romance," caused by Heinrich Reinhardt and William Frederick Peters, book and lyrics by Fred de Gresac and William Cary Duncan.

The Corsican appears as a figure torn between love, duty, a desire to be "dramatic," and an unholy habit of bursting forth into raucous and tremolo song every twenty minutes or so. He is represented in the time of his Austrian invasion, and while married to Josephine, he wins the love of a simple country-maid, Wanda, who, when she learns of his important identity, is so overcome that she sings the second act finale very badly. The third act discloses a St. Helena wheat-field, very well acted by the wheat. Peasants sing. An old man philosophizes paradoxically on the emptiness of earthly glory and the greatness of Napoleon. Wanda, wondering, wanders in and asks for Napoleon. "Alas!" answers the old man, "I fear you come too late." And he is right, for it is almost eleven o'clock, and the audience feels disappointed, to say the least, when Wanda, her arms outstretched, wanders off again, wondering. And that, upon my soul, is the gist of the plot of "The Purple Road," New York's latest "big" play, except for a weird palace conspiracy engineered against Napoleon by Fouché, Talleyrand, and two chorus men who think deeply. Not an iota of fun-relieves the dead-monotony of the book, except when a fainting comedian falls downstairs and later on somersaults out of a swinging door. Need one say more? The dialogue and lyrics of "The Purple Road" represent the acme of nothingness. Occasionally, the producers try to make his offering attractive, and in the second act especially, make amends to the extent that the man does not receive. The music of the Reinhardt-Peters work hardly rises above the commonplace at any stage of the proceedings and when it arrests attention succeeds only in fixing the mind on similarities of phrase or sequence which suggest better numbers in other comic operas.

Harrison Brockbank makes a thoroughly unconvincing figure of Napoleon and sings without polish or authority. Edward Martindel plays three roles and thrice acts stiffly and vocalizes with bad method. Harold H. Forde is a sad comedian and Vatti Valli shows no justification for her Wanda assignment. She possesses a cold manner and a voice that lacks sympathy. Eva Fallon, a cumbersome and colorless ingenue, fails to redeem those faults with her singing and awkward dancing. Harriet Burt's tremendously serious pas seul is little less than laughable in the face of the real terpsichorean demonstration



Raymond Hitchcock, Flora Zabelle and Grace Richmond, coming to the Salt Lake theater next week in "THE RED WIDOW."

which Emilie Lea gives with fetching abandon and remarkable grace, of body and limb. Janet Beecher wears a white gown and expresses pain with her eyebrows. Why William J. Ferguson as Fouché makes himself look like a goat, is a mystery as impenetrable as the plot of "The Purple Road."—The Able Seat.

Announcement of a new theatrical company was made this week which will insure fifty-one weeks of stock performances at the Colonial theater during the coming season, opening about August one. The time will be occupied by three separate companies, which will play the house in rotation, each remaining sixteen weeks. The

companies will be headed by William J. Kelly, who has been at the Colonial during the season just closing. Miss Edith Lyle will be Mr. Kelly's leading woman. A second company will have Willard Mack and Marjorie Rameau at its head, and a third will have Sidney Ayers and Maude Leone in the leading roles. The companies will play the Colonial theatre in this city, the Tabor Grand in Denver, Colo., and the Moore theatre in Seattle. At the end of each seventeen-week prior the Colonial company will go to Denver, the Seattle company will come here and the Denver company will move to Seattle. The final details for the general management and the contracts for the players have been com-

pleted. Acceptances have been received from all the leading players for each of the companies. John Cort of New York, Herman Auerbach of this city, William J. Kelly and E. J. Kelly will be in control of the new organization.

A contract has been closed with New York managers for a series of stock plays. The Colonial theatre in this city will be closed about July 15 for the purpose of cleaning and renovating and will reopen the first week in August. Just which of the three organizations will appear first in this city is as yet undecided.

"The Confession," by James Hallock Reid, as presented by William J.